DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 138 846 CG 011 308

AUTHOR Stilwell, William E.; Carrasquillo, Neris
TITLE Influence of Rural Puerto Rican Counselors on 11th Graders.
PUB DATE [76]
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counseling Effectiveness; Cultural Factors; Educational Planning; *Grade 11; *Parent Influence; *Peer Relationship; *Puerto Ricans; Research Projects; Rural Education; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Counselors; Vocational Counseling

ABSTRACT

Twelve years ago in a different culture Krumboltz and Varenhorst (1965) found that counselors were more influential over ninth graders than their parents and other ninth graders. The present study uses a Graeco-Latin square design and tries to assess counselor influence in rural Puerto Rico. The findings suggest counselors are usually less influential in vocational and educational planning; peers are more influential than anticipated, and different cultural expectations influence the results. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED138846

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Influence of Rural Puerto Rican Counselors on 11th Graders

William E. Stilwell
University of Kentucky

and

Meris Carrasquillo
Antillian College, P.R.

CG011308

Running head: Influence of Rural Puerto Rican Counselors

Abstract

Twelve years ago in a different culture Krumboltz and Varenhorst (1965) found that counselors were more influential over ninth graders than their parents and other ninth graders. The present study uses a Graeco-Latin square design and tries to assess counselor influence in rural Puerto Rico. The findings suggest counselors are usually less influential in vocational and educational planning; peers are more influential than anticipated, and different cultural expectations influence the results.

Influence of Rural Puerto Rican Counselors on 11th Graders

Secondary school counselors in Puerto Rico have a unique role. In one sense they are related to the mainland counselors politically, socially and by training. In another sense they are a new and emerging force in Puerto Rican education. They are needed to provide an impact upon students, parents and teachers. This study attempted to establish a milestone in the developing role of Puerto Rican counselors.

The members of a group have certain general expectations related to their positions or status in the group (Rodgers, 1973). Within the group each member is expected to perform a particular set of functions which is their role. One of the problems confronting secondary counselors in Puerto Rico is their role is not clearly understood by school faculty, students, parents, community and sometimes even by the counselor himself (Bastista, 1969). It should be pointed out that the typical Puerto Rican secondary counselor is female and the graduate of a training program staffed by counselor educators trained at major United States' universities.

According to the policy of Puerto Rico guidance program, individual counseling constitutes the primary role for secondary school counselors. A host of secondary roles serve to strengthen and enrich his primary role. The basic manuel for Puerto Rican counselors (Bastista, 1969) indicates that the secondary counselor should: (1) engage in individual counseling;

(2) help in planning and developing the guidance program in relation to students' needs; (3) be a leader/consultant in the students' evaluation and assessment plan; (4) have educational and vocational planning responsibilities; (5) make referrals; (6) provide placement services; (7) work with parents and school personnel; (8) conduct research and follow-up programs; and (9) promote public relations.

These nine primary and secondary functions are fairly typical of guidance programs. Indeed, Jones and Nelson (1970) codified similar guidelines in their comprehensive guidance program.

If the Puerto Rican secondary school counselors perform their role according to guidelines and expectations, then they should have a strong influence on molding students' attitudes and behaviors. In general, the role of the counselor should be that of shaping students' attitudes (Hoyt, 1970). Further, the closer the relationship between the counselors and others the greater will be the potency of such a relationship in the formulation of attitudes (Remmers, 1959). Often the expressed attitude appears to be related to a behavior change (Baron, Byrne & Griffitt, 1974). Indeed, the generally accepted task of counseling is behavior change (Barclay, 1971) and probably change by specific means (e.g., Krumboltz & Thoresen, 1975).

Earlier, Coleman (1960) established the notion of relative power of various student groups. The athletes, intellectuals and socializers

had their own special influence on peers who aspired to emulate them. Indeed, Coleman suggested that an intellectual olympiad might be a way to stimulate a new direction for secondary education. Also, McCandless (1972) has commented eloquently on the power that peers have on each other for facilitative and non-facilitative ends. The list is endless but the accumulation of evidence seems to show that peers have a great persuasive power over their age-mates in many situations.

The intensity of group pressure has also been noted frequently in the literature. Asch's (1956) study ably demonstrated the overwhelmingness of a consistent group judgment. More recent studies show that when an individual is confronted by a group which unanimously agrees with respect to a given behavior, attitude, or feeling, there is a strong pressure for the individual to conform (Baron, Byrne & Griffitt, 1974).

Bandura (1969) has argued that the status of the model has an influence on the observer's willingness to imitate that model, even for such complex cognitive activities as attitudes and behavior change. Counselors by age, training and role should have the necessary status to be persuasive. Indeed the comprehensive Yale communication studies (e.g., Hovland, Janis & Kelly, 1953) point to the crucial importance of the person actually communicating the attitudes. Further, Baron, Byrne and Griffitt (1974), found that communicator credibility is positively

related to attitude change such that highly credible sources are more effective in inducing change in attitudes than low credibility sources.

Finally, the family in rural Puerto Rico plays a special role in the development of its members. The family is extended, so that a parent watches over each member almost throughout their lives (Mellado, 1965). Thus, the parent role appears to have a strong influence on children in rural Puerto Rico.

In 1964 Krumboltz and Varenhorst explored the relative influence of three communicator groups on ninth graders enrolled at a junior high school in Palo Alto, California. The results showed that the greatest influence among ninth graders occurred when statements were ascribed to counselors. Also, the ninth graders' peers had a slight edge over counselors and parents concerning joining social clubs. Twelve years later and in a very different environment we wanted to explore the relative influence of counselors, parents and peers on secondary students in a rural Puerto Rican school. Whose opinion holds the greatest influence? Do Puerto Rican counselors provide a unique influence in their school? The thrust is identical to Krumboltz and Varenhorst, but the time and place for this study are different.

Method

Students

Comerio secondary school is located about 28 miles from San Juan,

the largest city in Puerto Rico. Typically about 70 percent of the seventh grade class graduated from high school. The two full-time counselors serve about 1700 seventh through twelfth graders and work with 44 teachers. This counselor-student ratio is found typically in rural Puerto Rican schools. One-hundred-fifty-three 11th graders enrolled in seven randomly selected classrooms provided data for this study.

Stimulus materials

Earlier Krumboltz and Varenhorst developed statements which met three criteria--significance, controversiality and non-inflammatory issues. Their procedures were followed with certain modifications. A pool of statements on educational and vocational planning were prepared in English for review by selected counselor educators. Then selected statements were translated into Spanish so that each statement contained only 13 words. A preliminary questionnaire of 17 statements was sent to Comerio school and administered to a small sample of 21 eleventh graders. These students were asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Three statements were selected in which there was no distinct modal response, no strong agreement, and no strong disagreement among the 21 students. The three statements selected for the stimulus materials were: (1) Elective subjects should be chosen according to personal interests and vocational

plans; (2) The school contributes to the physical, intellectual, and social development of its students; and (3) The different school programs bring experiences that improve mental and physical health.

Design

The most parsimonious design for a survey of this type is a Graeco-Latin square. The full range of statement, source and order combinations can be easily tested in each of nine different forms. We used this design to cause a minimum of interference and indeed required about two minutes of student time. Using the three statements, nine different forms of the stimulus materials were prepared as presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

On each form all three statements appeared so that each statement was ascribed to a different communicator source, counselor, parent or peer. Table 1 shows that the order effect is counter-balanced for statements and sources. To maximize on the group pressure, we ascribed a 90 percent agreement level to each of the communicators for each statement. Form 1 is reproduced as Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The procedure for actually administering the stumulus materials required some special plans since the data were collected by seven home room teachers. First we prepared a set of administrative guidelines for the teachers. In these guidelines we tried to anticipate student and/or teacher questions. Essentially, we wanted: (1) no student names on the forms; (2) students to try to respond to each item even though it might be difficult for them to make a decision; (3) students to understand that the purpose of the questionnaire was to sample a variety of important topics; and (4) the teachers to distribute the forms randomly in each classroom. Second, we stacked the nine forms so that the form order was 1, 2, 3, . . 8, 9, 1, 2, etc. Still, for three forms we collected an uneven number of respondents. Accordingly, the number of students responding to each form was reduced randomly to 17, thereby equalizing cell frequencies.

Results and Discussion

The 153 student responses were scored on a five-point scale in which 1 was for "disagree all the time" and 5 was "agree all the time". With Winer's (1962) mixed design, Plan 11, a three-way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis. Winer indicated that special data order can provide an in-depth analysis of one significant interaction. The O x C interaction was so analyzed. The results are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Unlike the Krumboltz and Varenhorst's results in which only communicator and statement main effects were statistically significant, we obtained one mildly ($P<.10$) significant main effect and two significant interactions. Neither the order nor the statement main effect was significant. The latter finding was anticipated because we tried to use statements on which there was no agreement.

The interesting and challenging finding was that a mildly significant difference was found among the three different communicator groups to whom the three statements had been ascribed. Since we had found relatively little information on the influence of Puerto Rican secondary school counselors, thus this study was striking into new territory, we felt justified in using the .10 level. The means the means for communicator groups and statements are pooled over order and reported in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

On the average the greatest agreement was obtained when the statements were attributed to the parents. Almost the same level of agreement, but slightly lower, was found when statements were attributed to 11th grade

peers. The challenge from these data is that the counselors appeared to command the least influence of the three groups. This surprising finding may be a sample of a cultural difference, but it could also be a warning to counselors in general.

Two significant interactions reached a conventional level of significance ($P<.05$). The order by communicator interaction lends itself to interpretation. The means for order position and communicator groups were pooled and reported in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

The pattern of agreement is interesting and inconsistent among communicators and statements. Parents commanded their greatest agreement when place in the first position on the form (i.e., 2, 5, and 8). Counselors were more influential in the second position on the stimulus materials. Peers were influential in the third position. This finding might suggest an order for seeking vocational and educational planning help by the 11th graders or it might simply reflect an availability of the parents. The second order interaction further reinforces the notion that students seek out parents, peers and counselors for difficient aspects of a problem area.

The results of this study are inconsistent with Krumboltz and

Varenhorst's findings: (1) counselor communicator group at Jordan Junior High in Palo Alto clearly was the most influential group and (2) the mean responses on the nine forms ranged between 2.48 and 3.52. Such inconsistencies might be interpreted as reflection: (1) the emergence of a new youth-power; (2) the possible cultural differences which encourage agreeing with the majority or an authority; and/or (3) the comparative newness of counselors in rural Puerto Rican secondary schools. Still, our findings should not be unanticipated. For example, Mezzano (1971) found that students prefer to discuss important problems first with friends, then with parents and lastly with their secondary counselors. In particular, Vazquez (1976) in a questionnaire study reported that Puerto Rico's secondary students perceive the counselors as less influential than teachers in formulating their occupational plans. Thus, we appear to have sampled the effects of cultural differences and changing influences of peers and counselors.

Generalizations from these findings should be made only with the greatest caution. The small sample, few statements, selected communicator's groups and different culture provide enough restraint to limit our generalizations. Yet the study was successfully implemented and it did generate a host of new questions. For example:

1. How do the selected questions influence these results? Would we obtain a stronger difference among communicator groups with

another set of statements?

2. To what extent would similar results be found for Puerto Rican urban sample? How would a smaller counselor-student ratio favorably increase the influence of Puerto Rican secondary counselors?
3. How does the Puerto Rican culture influence the students, parents and/or community's view of the counselor? Is the model developed for Puerto Rican counselors appropriate for the Puerto Rican culture?
4. What other persons or groups influence student attitudes? Should another study use teachers as a communicator in order to determine whether they stand out as influential persons in the Puerto Rican schools?
5. Does the level of counselor preparation (B.A. or M.A.) relate to their respective influence in the school? Similarly, does the "time on site" relate to their contribution to the students and teachers?

The results from this study may arise from the suggestion that Puerto Rican secondary school counselors' roles are not clearly understood by the school community, and sometimes even by the counselors themselves (Batista, 1969). Because of this uncertainty, counselors may need to create a team approach to providing academic, affective and career

guidance (Stilwell & Santoro, 1976). Actually, Puerto Rican counselors are comparatively new to the secondary schools having been granted diploma status since 1952 and masters degree since 1965. Thus, we believe this study indicates the potential power Puerto Rican counselors have to grow, to move on to maturity, to shape attitudes and contribute to positive behavior changes.

Asch, S. E. Studies of independence and conformity. A minority of me against a unanimous majority. Psychological monographs, 1956, 70, (whole no. 416).

Bandura, A. Principles of behavior modification. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Barclay, J. R. Foundations of Counseling Strategies. New York: Wiley, 1971.

Baron, A., Byrne, D. & Griffitt, W. Social psychology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974.

Batista, A. El Orientador de escuela secundaria. Area de Instruccion Vocacional, y Tecnica Programa de Orientacion, Departamento de Instruccion Publica, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, 1969.

Coleman, J. S. The adolescent subculture and academic achievement. The American Journal of Sociology, 1960, 65, 337-347.

Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L. & Kelley, H. H. Communication and persuasion. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.

Hoyt, K. B. The "Image gap" in vocational educational counseling. School Shop, 1970, 22-24.

Jones, G. B. & Nelson, D. E. Approaching a vocational education problem through Project TALENT-related guidance system components. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 1970, 18, 187-193.

Krumboltz, J. D. & Thoresen, C. E., (Eds.), Counseling Methods. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Krumboltz, J. D. & Varenhorst, B. Molders of pupils attitudes, Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1965, 43, 443-446.

McCandless, B. R. Adolescents' behavior and development. Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1970.

Mallado, P. R. Puerto Rico y occidente. Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1965.

Mezzano, J. Concerns of students and preference for male and female counselors. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 1971, 20, 42-47.

Remmers, H. H. Introduction to opinion and attitude measurement. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959

Rodger, R. Family interaction and transaction, the developmental approach. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973.

Stilwell, W. E., & Santoro, D. A. A training model for the 80's. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1976, 54, 322-326.

Vazquez, A. Perceived effects of school on the occupational plans of high school dropouts and non-dropouts in the public school system of Puerto Rico. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1976.

Winer, B. J. Statistical Principles in Experimental Design. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962.

Reference Notes

1. Stilwell, W. E. Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506
2. Carrasquillo, Meris Instructor, Department of Education, Antillian College Extension, Rio Piedias, Puerto Rico.

Table 1

Experimental Design

	FIRST		SECOND		THIRD	
	Statement	Attributed	Statement	Attributed	Statement	Attributed
Form	No.	to:	No.	to:	No.	to:
1	1	Peers	2	Parents	3	Counselors
2	3	Parents	1	Counselors	2	Peers
3	2	Counselors	3	Peers	1	Parents
4	2	Peers	3	Parents	1	Counselors
5	1	Parents	2	Counselors	3	Peers
6	3	Counselors	1	Peers	2	Parents
7	3	Peers	1	Parents	2	Counselors
8	2	Parents	3	Counselors	1	Peers
9	1	Counselors	2	Peers	3	Parents

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Responses to the Questionnaire

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Within subjects	306	180.0664	0.5885	
Order (O)	2	0.2227	0.1113	0.2053
Communicator (C)	2	2.9570	1.4785	2.7267*
Statement (S)	2	0.3438	0.1719	0.3170
O x C	2	4.5234	2.2617	4.1711**
O x S	2	0.3164	0.1582	0.2918
C x S	2	0.8359	0.4180	0.7711
O x C x S	6	14.7031	2.4505	4.5193**
Error	288	156.1641	0.5422	
Between subjects	152	280.1484	1.8431	
O x C	2	0.5781	0.2891	
O x S	2	1.0508	0.5254	
C x S	2	0.1094	0.0547	
O x C x S	2	1.7188	0.8594	
Error between				
Total between				

*p<.10

**p<.05

Table 3

Mean Scores of Responses to Each Statement When Attributed To Each Communicator Group (Pooled Over Order)

Statement No.	Attributed to: Peers	Parents	Counselors	Mean of each Statement
1	4.3333	4.2745	4.1569	4.2549
2	4.1961	4.2353	4.1373	4.1895
3	4.2745	4.3333	4.0196	4.2092
Overall Mean	4.2663	4.2810	4.1046	

Table 4

Mean Scores of Responses to Each Order When Attributed To Each Communicator Group (Pooled Over Statement)

	Attributed to:			
Order	Peers	Parents	Counselors	Mean of each Order
1	4.1961	4.3922	4.1569	4.2484
2	4.1961	4.1961	4.2353	4.2092
3	4.4118	4.2549	3.9216	4.1961
Overall Mean	4.2680	4.2810	4.1040	

Figure 1

Form 1

In a recent survey over 90 percent agreement was found on the following statements by three groups of people. Do you agree with each of the following groups?

1) Over 90 percent of the 11th grade students agree with the following statement: "Elective subjects should be chosen according to personal interests and vocational plans."

   Do you:

   Agree all of the time? _____

   Agree most of the time? _____

   Agree half of the time? _____

   Disagree most of the time? _____

   Disagree all of the time? _____

2) Over 90 percent of the 11th grade parents agreed with the following statement: "The school contributes to the physical, intellectual, and social development of its students." Do you:

   Agree all of the time? _____

   Agree most of the time? _____

   Agree half of the time? _____

   Disagree most of the time? _____

   Disagree all of the time? _____

3) Over 90 percent of school counselors agreed with the following statement: "The different school programs bring experiences that improve mental and physical health." Do you:

Agree all of the time? _____

Agree most of the time? _____

Agree half of the time? _____

Disagree most of the time? _____

Disagree all of the time? _____